

MLAURIN'S REPLY

To the Democratic Executive Committee.

PARIS MOUNTAIN, S. C.,

August 5th, 1901.

To the Democratic Executive Committee, State of South Carolina.

Gentlemen: The official notice of the action of a majority of your committee of July 25th was received by me on August 1st five days after it had been announced in the newspapers. This published announcement was the first notice I had that any action affecting me was to be taken by your committee. I am now officially informed that the majority of your committee condemns my course in the Senate, demands my resignation and undertakes to expel me from the Democratic party. Twenty-one men have attempted to usurp the powers of the 90,000 Democratic voters of South Carolina and as an incident, in a meeting called for another purpose have hastily endeavored to do what can be done only by solemn proceedings of impeachment, expressly provided for in the Constitution of the United States.

I hold my commission from the Democratic voters of South Carolina. I recognize no authority but theirs, take no orders from any source but them, and shall in due course appeal to them for judgment on my course as a Senator and my character as a man and a Democrat.

Personally I am indifferent to your action because nobody has made you my master or censor, and I regard what you have done as merely expressing the malice and the fears of one individual, Senator B. R. Tillman. But for this always evil and indecent influence ordinary respect for the proprieties, would probably have prevented the four of you who are my declared competitors for the seat I now have the honor to occupy, from attempting to use the power entrusted to you by your party to remove a rival from your path.

As a citizen and Democrat of South Carolina I am mortified by your action, because it has brought upon the State the condemnation and the ridicule of the press and the public throughout the country. Unhappily, those who are not intimately acquainted with our conditions accept the action of your majority as representing the intelligence and Democracy of our State and both are made objects of derision. Against this I wish to enter my solemn protest. I shall demonstrate how unfair, absurd and undemocratic your action is; and I shall trust to the Democrats of South Carolina to repudiate it when the opportunity is given them. Your purpose is to deny that opportunity.

It is in strong contrast with the blatant boast of Senator Tillman at Gaffney to put me on trial before the party on the hustings with himself as prosecutor. As you know, I sought that test by accepting a proposal of appeal to the people, but the governor saw fit to forbid it. Now Senator Tillman appears as prosecutor against me in my absence and by proceedings like those of the star chamber, which was the most infamous tribunal of English history, and the most abhorrent to Anglo-Saxon instincts, seeks to exclude me from the party and its debates and public assemblages. It is your duty, as custodians of the party interests, to seek recruits and to strengthen the party. To save Senator Tillman from staking his record, strength and fortunes against mine, you undertake to exclude me and my friends from the party. Whatever your individual motives may have been, the purport of your action is to facilitate the Senator in dodging me and to deny the people the opportunity of passing on my positions and conduct. It seems to me the Democratic masses of South Carolina are competent to say at the polls whether or not I have been a faithful Senator and a consistent Democrat. Why should you attempt to prevent them?

It is no cause for wonder that Senator Tillman should seek to make political assassins of you to avoid open and fair fight. He has climbed to power by venomous abuse of many of the purest men in the State who opposed him, for which he has always carefully shirked personal responsibility, and on the political lives and fortunes of those who befriended him while he needed friends. Norris, Tindal and Donaldson, men representing earnest purpose and the interests of the farmers of the State and therefore strong, were used by him to promote his own interests and then thrust aside. Irby, Shell and Farley did despising him because of his treachery to them and to the people. I am now in his way and because he has failed to strike me down he incites you to attempt to strangle me, and at the same time to destroy a white primary, to his advocacy of which he owed much of the best of his early following. Party

principles are fixed and to the principles of the Democratic party I have been uniformly faithful. Party policies are determined from time to time by party elections and conventions, and no man nor body of men has the power to say between those elections what policies shall be the tests of party loyalty. Senator Tillman is assuming the prerogative of supreme boss and dictator to say who shall or shall not be regarded as a Democrat next year. I do not concede any such power to him nor to you. He, nor all of your committee together, has not the power to exclude from candidacy nor the polls at the Democratic primary the humblest citizen of South Carolina who declares himself to be a Democrat and pledges himself to support the party nominees. Suppose in 1890 the Executive Committee of the State had ruled out of the party all who engaged in the "Farmers' Movement?" Suppose two years later it had excluded all who favored the Sub Treasury idea? Such action would have been unjust, tyrannical and insulting to thousands of good citizens and Democrats, but not more so than this proceeding of yours.

In his double character as prosecuting witness and attorney against me, Senator Tillman is reported as saying before your committee that I have voted with the Republicans "in important matters" and that he has seen me conferring with Republican Senators. As I will show by the records he himself frequently voted with the Republicans "in important matters" as all other Democratic Senators have done from time to time. It is frequently necessary, proper and courteous to confer with members of the opposite party, as he knows and as every man of practical sense knows. These expressions of his are attempts to take advantage of credulity and ignorance. I do not think there is a man in South Carolina so ignorant as to be really deceived by them. He can not put me under suspicion as he has put himself by his own acts. I have not in public office retrograded from a, perhaps, honorable bankruptcy to dishonorable and unexplained wealth. He and I have drawn the same salaries but I have found it impossible to save a dollar from mine. I have never, however, truckled to corporations with the fawning of a tamed spaniel, made speeches against them, then voted for them, and accepted favors as he has done. I have never been the sole boss and buying agent of a newly created whiskey trust with its rebates of \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year, none of which ever reached the State treasury. I have never had the handling of a State bond refunding scheme with \$28,000 of commissions never yet accounted for or explained.

A year ago Senator Tillman went into North Dakota and made speeches advocating the re-election of a Republican Senator—Mr. Pettigrew. Senator Tillman and this Senator were prominent in preventing by filibustering tactics a vote on the subsidy bill. The newspapers said that Mr. Hill, head of the Northern Pacific lobby against the subsidy bill, gave Senator Tillman's friend and associate a "tip" which paid him \$450,000 in the stock market. Birds of a feather, gentlemen of the committee, always flock together.

Has Senator Tillman, prosecuting attorney against my Democracy, ever failed to abuse Democrats and Democracy? Do you know that in the last two Democratic national conventions he has supported the nomination of Republicans? In 1896 he favored Senator Teller for President, an old line Republican, and one of the bitterest foes of the South in reconstruction days. He had himself appeared before the convention as a competitor of W. J. Bryan and been ignominiously snowed under. In 1900 he was for Towne, also a Republican, for Vice President. Is he the man to be supreme arbiter and judge of what is Democracy in South Carolina?

In the Senate I have labored, as the records will show, to broaden the prosperity of the country, to promote the interests of my own people, to spread civilization, to enlarge and increase opportunity for our young men and to stimulate enterprise. His whole political course and method have been to tear down, to abuse and oppose, to blight and restrain, to bite where he dared and to fawn where he feared or sought favor. I shall ask the people to contrast the records and shall claim my right as a free man, a born and reared Democrat and a Senator from South Carolina, to do it regardless of the orders of twenty-one members of the Executive Committee. I shall ask the people to decide between the man who has tried to help cotton factories, open highways of commerce and to so command the

Democratic party as to command for it the confidence and respect of the business and laboring elements North and South; and that of the man whose conduct and record has been to sink the party to disrepute and impotence. I shall ask them to say whether they prefer the Senator who has tried to retain for South Carolina the honor and dignity won by a long line of illustrious sons and glorious deeds, or the Senator who has postured as buffoon and bully and who proclaimed on the floor of the Senate that he represented a constituency of ballot box stuffers and murderers who wanted their share of the stealage.

He is now in a Northern State holding up our people as negro murderers and ballot box thieves.

You have undertaken to condemn and expel and depose me, not only without a hearing but without evidence. Upon what ground are my good faith as a Senator and my fidelity as a Democrat assailed? It is on the tariff? None of you of the committee can prove to the people that the Democratic party is a free trade party. It has opposed a tariff for protection only, but as early as 1797 we had a protective tariff and we have never in the one hundred and four years since known free trade. General Hancock, the party nominee for president in 1880, regarded the tariff as a local question. Samuel J. Randall, for years a party leader and Speaker of the House, was a protectionist. In every Congress where the question has been presented numbers of Democrats have voted against and helped to kill free trade. I have contended that Southern products should be put on equality with others, and in 1897 I fought to have rice, pine lumber and cotton protected. The cry of "Republican" was raised against me then, but the people, before whom the issue was squarely put, endorsed me by an overwhelming vote. Are you now undertaking to reverse that verdict?

I have favored ship subsidies. It is a great question and one I submit on which the people of this State are competent to pass after hearing full argument. The subject has never been discussed before them although it is of vast importance to the prosperity of this State. The purpose of the subsidy is to develop the building and operation of great fleets of American ships. It touches the interest of our sea ports, of our lumber industries, of all our manufacturing enterprises and our great agricultural products. It is a question on which some of the ablest Democrats of the House and Senate are divided. I most humbly submit that it is not in order for twenty-one members of your committee to rule that the Democratic masses of South Carolina shall not at their campaign meetings hear this matter of vital interest to them discussed; and that the people of the sea coast cities, who would like to see new fleets of commerce brought to their harbors and the lumbermen and owners of forest lands who would be glad to sell material for more ships, are to be thrown neck and heels out of the party because they favor ship subsidies. Senators Carlisle, Pugh and Morgan voted for a subsidy bill which has been in force ten years and which has helped our Brazilian trade, in a measure at least. Are they not Democrats, according to the decision of Senator Tillman and your committee?

I believe that it is our duty to develop the new territory which has come into our possession along commercial and industrial lines, to civilize them, and make them the equal of our own States in material prosperity. Senator Tillman would leave them after we have deprived them of the protection of Spain to a hopeless struggle as an independent nation without resources or self protection. Fortunately for us the records show that in building them up, we are going to benefit our own country. I want to give that territory the best form of government in the world, he does not want to give it any form of government at all. He says "free silver or burst." I say the American people have settled that question at the ballot box.

I am for a sound currency and constant employment for all who desire work at remunerative wages. This we cannot have without an outlet for our surplus products on equal terms with all our competitors in the markets of the world. Do you think the energetic, live, progressive young business man of the South, will long permit the cabals of a few scheming politicians to stand between him and the attainment of these glorious ends? If this is not Democracy, then gentlemen, I invite you to join hands with me in making it so.

These are the leading questions on which I understand my Democracy and loyalty have been assailed. The records give me little light as to what further ground there may be for your action. Allow me to summarize them briefly.

In the first session of the 55th Congress Senator Tillman and myself voted together in 148 of 150 yeas and nay votes.

I voted against him for protection to the farmers on an amendment to the tariff bill, proposed by Senator

Jones, of Arkansas, present chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee. Possibly you may reconvene your committee and read him out of party. I voted with Jones, Vest, Bacon, Bate, Berry, Daniel, Mills, Morgan and all the other Democrats, except Senators Tillman and McEnery, who voted with the Republicans. It was a straight party vote. On another amendment to the same bill I voted with the Democrats. Senator Tillman was the one Democrat voting with the Republicans. See Congressional Record, vol. 30, page 1577.

In the second session of the same Congress Senator Tillman and myself voted together on 82 of 95 roll calls. One vote on which we differed was on a motion to adjourn intended to defeat a resolution calling upon the President to intervene in Cuba. Senator Tillman voted with the Republicans to adjourn and the motion prevailed by one vote. I voted with the Democrats. The other votes on which we differed were unimportant and not party questions, the parties dividing on all. I favored the acceptance of the Hawaiian Islands along with such Democrats as Gorman, Kyle, Money, Morgan, Pettus and Sullivan, and he, with the other Democrats and some Republicans were opposed to it.

On page 4858, vol. 31, of the Record it is shown that I voted, with all the Democrats but three and all the Republicans, for a bill to provide for arbitration of disputes between railway companies and their employees. Senator Tillman was one of the three against it. We also differed on a bill prohibiting intoxicating liquors to be sold in the territory of Alaska. I favored and he opposed the prohibition. Possibly he had views on a dispensary and rebates there.

On a vote to recommit the conference report on the River and Harbor bill I voted for the recommitment with such Democrats as Chilton, Heitfeldt, Kenney, Mills, Rawlins and Turner. He voted against with such Republicans as Allison, Burrows, Culom, Davis, Elkins, Foraker, Hale, Hawley, Lodge, Perkins, Platt and Quay.

In the first session of the 56th Congress Senator Tillman and I voted together on 67 out of 71 roll calls. In each of the four cases in which we differed the parties were divided. The most notable of these was on the admission of Senator Quay. I voted for it with Senators Daniel, Kenney, McEnery, Morgan and Taliaferro, Democrats. He opposed with most of the Democrats and eleven Republicans, including Hanna, Platt, Foraker, Gallinger and Hale.

In the last session of the same Congress Senator Tillman and myself voted together in most of the 57 votes taken. On a resolution requiring the President to issue in ten days a proclamation disclaiming any purpose to exercise sovereignty over the Philippines I voted "nay" with Foster, Kyle, Lindsay, Morgan and Sullivan, Democrats. Senator Tillman was one of 22 favoring it. On an amendment declaring that it was not the purpose of the United States to exercise permanent control over the Philippines, Senator Tillman with most of the Democrats and Senator Hoar, Republican, voted "aye." I, with Senators Foster and Lindsay, Democrats, voted "nay."

On the final passage of the army bill we differed. I voted for it and had with me Senators Foster, Lindsay, Morgan and Sullivan. We voted together for amendments extending the Constitution of the United States over the Philippines on strict party lines.

On the question of governing our outlying possessions he and I voted together and it is this that determines the matter of imperialism, not the possession of the territory. I voted to take possession and rule justly. He voted not to take possession but to rule.

He and I voted together on all party questions except those concerning the Philippines which my judgment, exercised as a Senator and a representative of the people, told me was a question of foreign relations, involving entirely new problems and therefore not properly a party question and on which my political judgment told me the country was practically united. The Democratic party was wrecked by being forced in this matter into a policy opposed to its own traditions, and the overwhelming sentiment of the country, against my protest and that of other loyal Democrats. Developments have proved that those who maintained that the pacification of these islands was impossible, that the people would never accept our control and that their retention would be unprofitable and disastrous were wrong. I am ready to go before the people of South Carolina and show them the facts. Do you undertake to say that I must resign and put myself out of the party because I favored upholding the dignity of the American flag after its troops had been fired on, and opposed a cowardly abandonment of the people of these islands to chaos? Is the proposition to punish me because I did not believe Aguinaldo to be the equal of George Washington or concede that the Filipinos could instantly and unguided organize for them-

selves a stable government and a high civilization?

I have been at some pains to show from the records, by volume and page, that where Senator Tillman and I differed in Congress it was not on party questions; and that he voted with the Republicans at least as often as I did, and that in every case where we divided I had with me Democrats who possess the confidence of the party throughout the country and whose Democracy not even his reckless and slanderous insolence dares to assail. I could go further and show other instances in which he has voted against the great majority of his party and even against his own declarations notably in the Platt amendment to the Cuban bill. He had declared his purpose to oppose and fight this to the last ditch; but he voted for it. Some of his present newspaper friends said at the time that he did it to curry favor with the Charleston vote, hoping to trade the exposition bill through. If that was the case, he was the shallow victim of a political green goods game and sold himself for sawdust. But I have said enough, I think, to prove to you and to the public that you—like many who have risen and gone before you have permitted yourselves to be made tools of by Senator Tillman, to promote his own base and brutal ends and to protect him from a struggle he fears to face, because he knows that the facts and arguments are all against him. His hope is to keep those facts and arguments from the people of South Carolina.

Accept my condolence on the unhappy and absurd situation into which this would be dictator has led you. You may be assured that he will find a crevice through which to crawl, leaving you to stand the fire when it becomes hot, and that having used you he will cast you aside like many he has formerly used.

I desire to proclaim to the world that you do not represent the intelligence, the Democracy or the people of South Carolina; and to you and Senator Tillman that he has never been my master, and shall never be; that he shall not escape the vengeance that must surely fall upon him when the people have been made to understand his motives, his methods, his debased character and his shameful record. To that grand conservator of free government, the reserved patriotism and common sense of the people, I make appeal against partisan intolerance and tyranny.

Very respectfully,

JOHN LOWNDES MCLAURIN.

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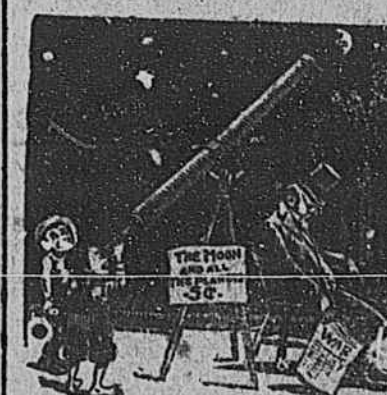
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